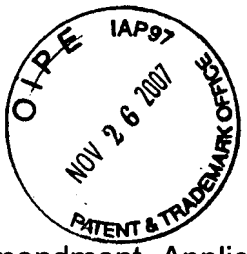

ATTACHMENT B
Remarks

By this amendment, Applicants have now amended the claims in such a manner as to overcome all outstanding rejections and objections, and to place this case in condition for allowance. In particular, in the Official Action, the Examiner considered Claim 7 to be free of the prior art and allowable and only objectionable as being dependent on a rejected base claim, and as set forth herein, Applicants have now made Claim 7 into an independent claim and have adjusted the remaining dependent claims accordingly in order to expedite the allowance in this case. Claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice accordingly since this subject matter has been incorporated into newly independent Claim 7. In addition, the subject matter of Claims 11 and 12 has been incorporated into new dependent Claims 16 and 17, respectively, which are also dependent upon allowed Claim 7. Applicants submit that the application in its present form is now in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth below.

In the Official Action, the Examiner objected to the Oath on the grounds that there was an alleged improper non-initialed and non-dated alteration. However, the present Oath has been deemed proper on numerous occasions and has been filed without objection in at least five other cases connected with the present case, including current U.S. Pat. No. 6,635,473. In a telephone call between Applicants' counsel and the Examiner, the Examiner acknowledged that the Oath was proper and that this objection would be withdrawn.

In the Official Action, the Examiner raised the non-statutory double patenting rejection with regard to two of the co-pending applications to the present application. In the first set of rejections, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-2, 4-5, and 8-11 under the

judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claims 1-6, 8, and 11-13 of U.S. Application No. 10/378,674. However, Claim 7 was not subject to this rejection, and the present amendments directed the subject matter of the present claims to Claim 7 and dependent claims thereto, and thus this rejection is respectfully traversed and should be withdrawn.

In the second of these double patenting rejections, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-8, 10, and 13-15 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 14, 16-17 and 23 of U.S. Application No. 10/690,184. Without addressing the merits of this rejection which Applicants contest, this rejection has become moot by the filing of a Terminal Disclaimer herewith.

In the Official Action, the Examiner also rejected Claims 1-5, 8-10, and 11-15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by WO 97/48727 of Guss et al. Further, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-6 and 8-15 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,380,370 to Doucette-Stamm et al. However, the Examiner recognized that Claim 7 was patentable over these prior art references and would be considered allowable if amended to add the limitations of its rejected base claim. Accordingly, without addressing the merits of this rejection which Applicants contest, these rejections have become moot by virtue of the present amendments, and the claims as they presently stand include only subject matter considered allowable and non-objectionable to the Examiner.

In light of the amendments and arguments, set forth in detail above, Applicants submit that the present application overcomes all prior rejections and has been placed in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

END OF REMARKS.